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Following is text of INR Intelligence Brief - "Situation Report
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(OCT/T -- Please cable text of attached
paper to above addressees.)

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THE END

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Drafted by: DCEllison/LGSarris INR/REA

Tel. Ext. 22277

Telegraphic transmission and
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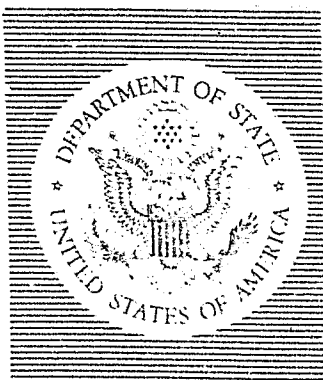
Clearances:

EA/LC Mr. Bennett (info)

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INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Ray S. Cline

May 9, 1970

(RSC)

Subject: Situation Report on Cambodia

Communist forces in the Cambodia/South Vietnam border area have stepped up their military operations outside the immediate border region and against important towns and transportation routes. These developments and the formation of a Sihanouk-led government-in-exile do not seem as yet to have increased political unrest in Phnom Penh and in other areas outside the battle zones. However, the political and military authority of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak government seems to be declining in the eastern and southern provinces. In trying to establish their control over the area from the Mekong east and south to the border, the Communists are probably trying to gain more room to move and protect their bases and to maneuver against Allied forces, while, at the same time, isolating and undermining the regime in Phnom Penh.

Military Situation. Outside the area of US/ARVN operations, the Communists are continuing to strengthen their position in the north-east and it appears that much of this area, never under firm government control, is virtually lost to the Communists. In perhaps their most significant military thrusts thus far against the Cambodian forces the Communists on May 6 captured Kratie, which commands a strategic position

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on the Mekong River, and Senmonorom on Route 141, the capital of Mondolkiri province. Recent reports indicate that virtually all of Mondolkiri was under effective Communist domination even before the fall of its capital; that the province of Stung Treng may also fall soon to the Communists; and that government morale and security are deteriorating throughout the northeast.

Elsewhere, the Communists retain control of the vital Neak Luong ferry crossing, which connects Phnom Penh and the Parrot's Beak area, despite some Cambodian attempts to retake it; there are reports that ethnic Cambodian troops recently airlifted to Phnom Penh from South Vietnam will participate in another government offensive in this area. Military leaders are also concerned about the situation on the southwest coast where Communist units attacked the town of Kampot several days ago; the government fears a possible attack on nearby Konpong Som (formerly Sihanoukville), Cambodia's only deepwater port. Owing to Communist activities, travel along Route 4, the main artery between Kompong Som and Phnom Penh now requires armed escort.

Internal Political Situation. Neither the deteriorating military situation nor Sihanouk's formation of a government-in-exile has significantly increased political tensions in Phnom Penh or seriously affected the Cambodian government's control in rural areas where the Communists are not operating. The Lon Nol-Sirik Matak government still appears to have the support of urban, intellectual, and student elements and the military and police establishments. Civil servants and the Buddhist hierarchy, while apparently not ardent supporters, are cooperating

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with the government. In villages and small towns, government propaganda teams continue working to stir up anti-Sihanouk, anti-Vietnamese and pro-government sentiments. Nevertheless, the government has not consolidated its authority in the countryside where large numbers of the inhabitants presumably hold to their traditional veneration of Sihanouk. There are scattered reports of young villagers taking to the jungles to avoid the draft and increasing reports that army and provincial guard recruits are deserting or defecting.

In areas they already control, the Vietnamese Communists are building a government infrastructure, using ethnic Cambodians where possible and Vietnamese cadre where necessary. One recent rallier interrogation indicates that a March 20 COSVN directive instructed Communist provincial political units on the Vietnam side of the Cambodian border to expand their administration into Cambodia while awaiting Khmer Rouge control. According to another report, the Communists have already organized a "United Front" administration, with Vietnamese Communists ostensibly assisting the Khmer Rouge in parts of a Communist base area in Kandal province. The Vietnamese Communists are also supporting a resurgence of the Khmer Rouge in western and southwestern Cambodia as a spearhead to build up for Sihanouk.

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Foreign Affairs. Ten Communist or leftist governments have announced diplomatic recognition of Sihanouk's government: Communist China, North Korea, North Vietnam, People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of South Vietnam, Albania, Romania, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Syria, and Iraq. Moscow and the other Eastern Europeans have not yet decided, although the Polish and Czech ambassadors have reportedly been called home for consultations. The Cambodian government has ordered Peking to withdraw its official personnel from Phnom Penh in the next few days, in exchange for safe passage for Cambodian embassy personnel in Peking. The North Vietnamese and PRG embassies will reportedly be ordered closed soon; both have been manned by a small caretaker staff since shortly after Sihanouk's ouster.

The Cambodian government has agreed to the establishment of a permanent South Vietnamese liaison mission in Phnom Penh without full diplomatic status, ostensibly to coordinate the return of refugees. There have also been informal Cambodian contacts with the Thai and some gestures on both sides aimed at countering traditional Thai-Cambodian animosity. The Thai cabinet has expressed a willingness to resume diplomatic relations, but the procedures have not yet been worked out and may take some time.

Prospects. The Communists seem to have responded to massive Allied operations across the Cambodia/Vietnam border by accelerating their military and political activities throughout the eastern provinces.

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Their immediate military objective appears to be to gain control of vital points and transportation routes in the area east of the Mekong River and south of Phnom Penh. This would enable them to rebuild and relocate their military base areas for carrying on the war in South Vietnam, give them more room to maneuver against Allied forces and thus stretch out and weaken Allied lines, and, at the same time, intensify the pressures on Phnom Penh. Although the Communists clearly hope for an early collapse of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak government, they probably do not plan a direct military attack on Phnom Penh at this time, and their tactics may well anticipate that for some period there will be contending Cambodian regimes. Thus we expect the Communists to step up still further their efforts to organize a Communist political apparatus and to gain the active support of ethnic Cambodians in the name of Sihanouk's government-in-exile, with a view to establishing a rival administration in "liberated areas" in Cambodia. There are clear signs that this process has begun at the local level in eastern areas.

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